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HOUSE APPROVES Obey's Request for FUNDS TO COMPLETE investigation of freshwater corrosion In Twin Ports

Measure Contains \$300,000 For Army Corps of Engineers to Complete Study

WASHINGTON, D.C – The U.S. House of Representatives today approved a request by Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) for \$300,000 in the FY2008 Energy and Water Appropriations bill to enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete an in-depth investigation into the cause of accelerated corrosion of steel structures in the Duluth–Superior Harbor.

“The Twin Ports play an important role in the region’s economy and we need to protect them,” said Obey, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. “That’s why we asked the Corps of Engineers to look into the unusual corrosion that’s going on, and why I requested these funds to allow the Corps to complete its investigation and come up with possible solutions.”

The Duluth-Superior Harbor is the heaviest tonnage port on the Great Lakes, moving 40 million metric tons of cargo per year. It contains 13 miles of steel harbor structures, all of which are corroding two to ten times faster than normal. It is estimated that replacement of these structures would cost \$100 million.

In response to local concerns about the problem, Obey and Congressman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) requested that the Corps of Engineers investigate. Following an initial study, the Corps recommended an in-depth follow up study that could quantify the corrosion rate, conduct a water chemistry analysis, check micro-biologically influenced corrosion, test for stray electrical currents, and assess the condition of critical steel structures. The funds Obey requested in next year's budget are intended to allow the Corps to complete that study and analyze the information.

However, "the bill must still be approved by the Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law _____, but having these funds included in today's House approved version means that a major hurdle has been cleared," Obey noted.

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